

USARPAC VOTING ACTION PLAN

1. References.

- a. AR 608-20, Army Voting Assistance Program, 28 Oct 04.
- b. Voting Assistance Guide - 2008-2009 (Misc. Pub 360-02).
- c. Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website (<http://www.fvap.gov>).
- d. DOD Directive 1000.4, Federal Voting Assistance Program, 14 Apr 04.
- e. DOD Directive 1344.10, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces on Active Duty, 2 Aug 04.
- f. 5 C.F.R. Part 734, Political Activities of Federal Employees.
- g. DOD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation, Chapter 6, Section 2, paragraphs 6-200-6-205, Political Activities of Civilian DOD Employees, 30 Aug 93.
- h. Sections 608 and 609 of Title 18, U.S. Code.

2. Required Voting Materials. The materials listed below may be ordered from your local Publication Center and are also available at the FVAP website (<http://www.fvap.gov/index.html>). Specific ordering instructions may be obtained by calling the Publication Centers: Hawaii - 656-0334, Alaska - 384-2980, and Japan - 263-3011.

a. The Voting Assistance Guide (VAG) is the primary reference document of the Federal Voting Assistance Program. It explains the current procedures for absentee registration and voting in each individual state as well as deadlines and addresses of election officials.

b. The SF76, Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is a postage-free form authorized to be used by all eligible active duty Soldiers/Family members and DA civilians located overseas and their Family members.

c. The SF186, Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) may be used in general elections for Federal offices by voters who requested a ballot from their state of legal residence at least 30 days before the general election, but did not receive an official absentee ballot. The FWAB must be received by the local election official NLT the deadline for each state (stipulated in the VAG).

d. DOD P-113 (a motivational poster) and a 2008 Presidential and State Primary Election Calendar are also available and should be posted in high traffic areas.

3. Prohibited Practices. The primary goal of the Army Voting Assistance Program is to actively encourage and assist Soldiers and other eligible individuals to register and vote without violating statute or regulation. Assistance in applying these guidelines may be obtained from your servicing Staff Judge Advocate's Office.

a. The use of lists to keep specific account of Soldiers' participating in the voting process is strictly prohibited.

b. Installation facilities will not be used for assemblies or meetings, media events, fund-raising or any social events associated with political candidates. If a current government official, who is also a candidate, is visiting the installation for official reasons, you must contact the local PAO for guidance.

c. Commanders will not support any political event which may imply association with any partisan group. Unit VAOs will not engage in or support any activities which could be interpreted as associating the Army with any political causes or candidates.

d. Leaders will not use their authority to influence any Soldier to vote or not to vote. This does not preclude personal discussions of political issues or candidates; however, leaders must be cautious not to display undue influence over subordinates during such conversations.

e. The types of voting literature which Unit VAOs can distribute is very limited.

(1) DOD policy prohibits active duty personnel from distributing ANY campaign material. They may only distribute information pertaining to the absentee voting process.

(2) Neither DOD nor DA is authorized to collect or distribute voting information of a partisan nature. Eligible voters MUST obtain this information from other sources. The FVAP Voting Information Center (VIC) provides a 24-hour recorded service with news and information on State and local elections, candidates, and issues. Anyone may call the VIC at 1-800-VOTE (8683), commercial (703) 588-1343, or DSN (312) 425-1343. Other toll free numbers can be found in the Voting Assistance Guide or the FVAP website (<http://www.fvap.gov/services/tollfree.html>).

f. VAOs will not contact State officials concerning a voting matter. The FVAP is the sole DOD representative authorized to contact State voting officials.

g. Active duty Soldiers and Reserve component Soldiers on active duty are required to adhere to the policies in DOD Directive 1344.10 and AR 600-20. DA civilian employees must comply with the limitations on political activity in 5 C.F.R Part 734 and JER, Chapter 6.

4. Responsibilities.

a. USARPAC G1. As the Senior Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) for the command, the G1 will:

(1) Ensure each MSC appoints a primary and alternate VAO in the appropriate grade and maintain a copy of each appointment memorandum. Maintain a list of MSC Senior VAOs and provide an updated list to HRC quarterly during 2008; i.e., NLT 7 Jan, 14 Apr, 14 Jul, and 6 Oct. The list will include the following information: Grade, name, address (mailing and E-mail), phone number (DSN and commercial), facsimile number (DSN and commercial), and the date completed FVAP voting assistance training (on-site or on-line).

(2) Complete FVAP training.

(3) Coordinate and ensure the distribution of voting materials printed by DOD.

(4) Establish a communication network to quickly disseminate voting information throughout the command.

(5) Monitor MSC's voting programs and ensure compliance with DA directives.

(6) Establish a "Voting Action Line" to provide a rapid response to voting problems as they arise. Notify the installation operator of this phone number.

b. Major Subordinate Commanders will:

(1) Appoint, in writing, a Senior and alternate VAO to manage their command's voting assistance program throughout the election year. Where possible, the Senior VAO will hold the rank of MAJ or higher or a civilian equivalent. If this is not possible, then the next most senior officer, NCO or civilian shall be appointed. The Senior VAO must have retention in the unit through Dec 08.

(2) Ensure all subordinate units with 25 or more personnel have a Unit VAO.

(3) Ensure all Senior and alternate VAOs complete the FVAP voting assistance training within 90 days of appointment. This may be accomplished via the FVAP website <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/vaotrng.html>.

(4) Ensure adequate voting materials are available to support your subordinate units. As a minimum, each Unit VAO must have four FPCAs and one FWAB for each assigned Soldier and DA civilian. Ensure a FPCA is delivered to every Soldier by 15 Jan of each year. Ensure a FPCA is included in orientation packets for newly assigned personnel.

(5) Ensure each subordinate command establishes a voting assistance plan which with special emphasis on those events listed below. Evaluate the effectiveness of the program on a continual basis and ensure required reports are submitted to the USARPAC Senior VAO as requested by established suspense dates (Encl 1).

(a) Army Voter Registration Month. During August, all Soldiers should receive at least one briefing on the absentee registration and voting process. The availability of voting materials and personal assistance as well as the importance of voting will be stressed. However, keeping lists of Soldiers and recording their decisions regarding registering to vote is strictly prohibited.

(b) Armed Forces Voters Week (31 Aug - 7 Sep 08). This week should be used by commanders and Unit VAOs to assist those who have not already registered and should be the culmination of the formal registration effort.

(c) Absentee Voters Week (12 - 18 Oct 08). Encourage the completion and mailing of absentee ballots prior to the General election. If absentee voters in Japan have not received an official ballot from their State by the end of this week, they should submit a FWAB. If an official ballot is received subsequent to the submission of the FWAB, it should also be completed and returned to the State immediately.

(d) Designate other days to emphasize the importance of voting. For example, July 4th celebrations, unit organizational days, command picnics, Family Readiness Group meetings, etc.

(6) Ensure USARPAC G1 is notified immediately whenever a voter is denied the opportunity to vote in any State. POC is Ms. Betty Stevenson, 438-8678.

(7) Ensure Unit VAOs notify all eligible voters absentee ballots must be mailed NLT 14 - 30 days prior to the election.

(8) Establish a communication network to quickly disseminate voting information throughout the subordinate units. Provide installation telephone operators with the names and phone numbers of Unit VAOs and ensure it is updated continuously.

(9) Establish and maintain a continuity folder to include applicable reference materials, appointment orders, and certificates of training.

(10) Incorporate voting assistance support into the annual Personnel Asset Inventories.

(11) Ensure nonpartisan offers of assistance by on-post activities, such as Family Readiness Groups, youth organizations, veteran's organizations, and service associations, are accepted, when appropriate, and integrated into your voting program. However, these offers MUST be coordinated with your SJA prior to acceptance to ensure compliance with all provisions of law and policy.

(12) Ensure VAOs at all levels of command (military and civilian) are formally evaluated (OER/NCOER/appraisal) on the way they perform their voting assistance duties.

(13) Conduct a formal evaluation of the command's voting program and provide an After Action Report to G-1 NLT 31 Dec 08. Report should be sent via E-mail to betty.stevenson@shafter.army.mil or FAX 438-2482.

c. Unit commanders (down to company and detachment level) will:

(1) Appoint, in writing, a Unit VAO (1LT/SFC or above) in all units with 25 or more personnel. Appoint a Unit VAO for every 50 Soldiers in the unit. Ensure all Soldiers know the name of their Unit VAOs.

(2) Provide Unit VAOs the necessary time and resources to perform their voting assistance duties.

(3) Provide all Soldiers the opportunity and assistance to vote. It is illegal to use military authority to influence anyone to vote or not to vote. Ensure Soldiers and their eligible Family members have ready access to absentee voter registration, State deadlines, and assistance as necessary.

(4) Train all Soldiers on absentee registration and voting procedures. Provide training and voting assistance to units preparing for deployment.

(5) Remind Soldiers to send in a new FPCA whenever their mailing address changes. Otherwise, their absentee ballot will be mailed to an incorrect address.

(6) Establish and maintain a continuity folder to include applicable reference materials, appointment orders, and certificates of training.

(7) Ensure Unit VAOs are formally evaluated (OER/NCOER/appraisal) on the way they perform their voting assistance duties.

d. Commanders of deploying units will appoint, in writing, a forward-deployed Senior VAO in the grade of MAJ or above, ensure all subordinate units with 25 or more personnel have a Unit VAO appointed in the grade of 1LT/SFC, and ensure all personnel in the area know how to contact these individuals.

e. Office of Public Affairs, USARPAC will:

(1) Use internal media channels to distribute voting information provided by DOD, DA, and the USARPAC SVAO.

(2) Conduct an effective publicity plan for this campaign.

(3) Provide a link from the USARPAC Homepage to the Federal Voting Assistance website.

f. Staff Judge Advocates will:

(1) Develop a working relationship with SVAOs and VAOs at all levels to ensure local voting assistance programs are legal and comply with DOD and DA regulatory guidance.

(2) Advise persons eligible to receive legal assistance on the more difficult residency questions.

5. Reporting Requirements. See Appendix.

APPENDIX

Required Reports (2007-2008)

<u>SUSPENSE DATE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
2 Jan 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Dec 07)
1 Feb 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Jan 08)
29 Feb 08	MSC Voting Action Plan
3 Mar 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Feb 08)
4 Apr 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Mar 08)
2 May 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Apr 08)
2 Jun 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (May 08) Examples of events to publicize and register voters
3 Jul 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Jun 08)
7 Jul 08	Explanation of plans to promote "Army Voter Registration Month" in Aug
4 Aug 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Jul 08) Activities planned to publicize "Armed Forces Voters Week" (week of 31 Aug)
3 Sep 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Aug 08) Examples of successful efforts during Army Voter Registration Month", estimate of how many Soldiers participated in mass registration effort, and plans to ensure Soldiers receive and execute ballots during "Absentee Voters Week" (week of 12 Oct)
3 Oct 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Sep 08)
3 Nov 08	Monthly Status/Metric Report (Oct 08)
31 Dec 08	After Action Report